

Message Text

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TAGS: ELAB VE

SUBJ: MEP-COPEI COALITION MAINTAINS CONTROL OF FEDEPETROL

1. MOVIMIENTO ELECTORAL DEL PUEBLO (MEP) AND THE SOCIAL CHRISTIANS (COPEI) REELECTED CARLOS PINERUA(MEP) PRESIDENT OF THE PRINCIPAL VENEZUELAN PETROLEUM WORKERS FEDERATION(FEDEPETROL) ON FEB 7. SEVEN-MAN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF FEDEPETROL WILL HAVE FOUR REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEP-COPEI COALITION AND THREE MEMBERS OF ACCION DEMOCRATICA(AD). THE MEP-COPEI VICTORY HAS TO BE VIEWED AS A SUBSTANTIAL SETBACK FOR AD, WHICH DEVOTED LARGE AMOUNTS OF TIME, EFFORT AND MONEY TO ITS CAMPAIGN TO RECAPTURE CONTROL OF FEDEPETROL. AD MADE A SURPRISINGLY WEAK SHOWING AND WAS BARELY ABLE TO EKE OUT A PLURALITY IN THE VOTING. FEDEPETROL REMAINS ONE OF THE FEW VENEZUELAN TRADE UNIONS WHERE MEP HAS REMAINED STRONG AND UNITED WITH FEW DEFECTIONS TO AD.

2. SUCH FAR LEFT GROUPS AS THE MOVIMIENTO AL SOCIALISMO (MAS) AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF VENEZUELA (PCV) WERE UNABLE TO INFLUENCE THE FEDEPETROL CONGRESS AND FAILED TO ELECT ANY NATIONAL OFFICERS OF FEDEPETROL.

3. IN HIS VICTORY ADDRESS PINERUA PROMISED FEDEPETROL WOULD CON-

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TINUE TO DEDICATE ITSELF TO "NON-POLITICAL TRADE UNIONISM" AND

CONCENTRATE ON OBTAINING ECONOMIC BENEFITS FOR ITS MEMBERS IN THE UPCOMING CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS. PINERUA REITERATED THE WORKERS' SUPPORT FOR NATIONALIZATION BUT ADDED THAT HE AND THEY WERE UNALTERABLY OPPOSED TO "THE USE OF THE PETROLEUM INDUSTRY BY THE GOVT, THE GOVERNING PARTY, OR ANYONE ELSE FOR THEIR OWN BENEFIT BECAUSE THE INDUSTRY BELONGS TO ALL VENEZUELANS."

4. COMMENT. WHILE AD REMAINS THE FIRST FORCE IN VENEZUELAN TRADE UNIONISM, ITS CONTROL IS FAR FROM COMPLETE AS DEMONSTRATED IN THE FEDEPETROL ELECTIONS AND THE OCT ELECTIONS IN THE IRON MINES (CARACAS 11087). THE GOV IS NOW FACED WITH THE PROSPECT OF HAVING TO NEGOTIATE NEW CONTRACTS WITH BOTH PETROLEUM WORKERS AND IRON MINERS WHO WILL BE REPRESENTED BY MEMBERS OF OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES. THE NEGOTIATIONS PROMISE TO BE LONG AND DIFFICULT, ALTHOUGH THE PROSPECT OF A RANK-AND-FILE REVOLT AGAINST THE LEADERSHIP IN EITHER UNION HAS PROBABLY BEEN REDUCED, SINCE THE QUESTION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST WHICH MIGHT HAVE ARISEN IF BOTH THE UNIONS AND MANAGEMENT WERE AD-CONTROLLED HAS BEEN ELIMINATED.
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